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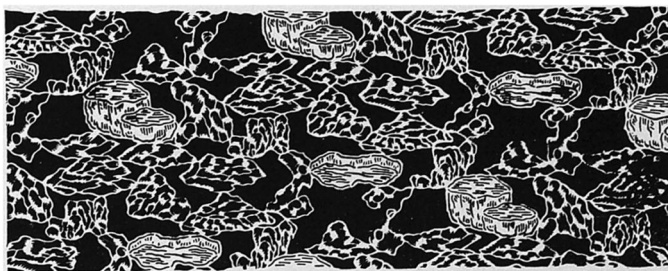
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JAPANESE STENCIL  
Perforated Paper

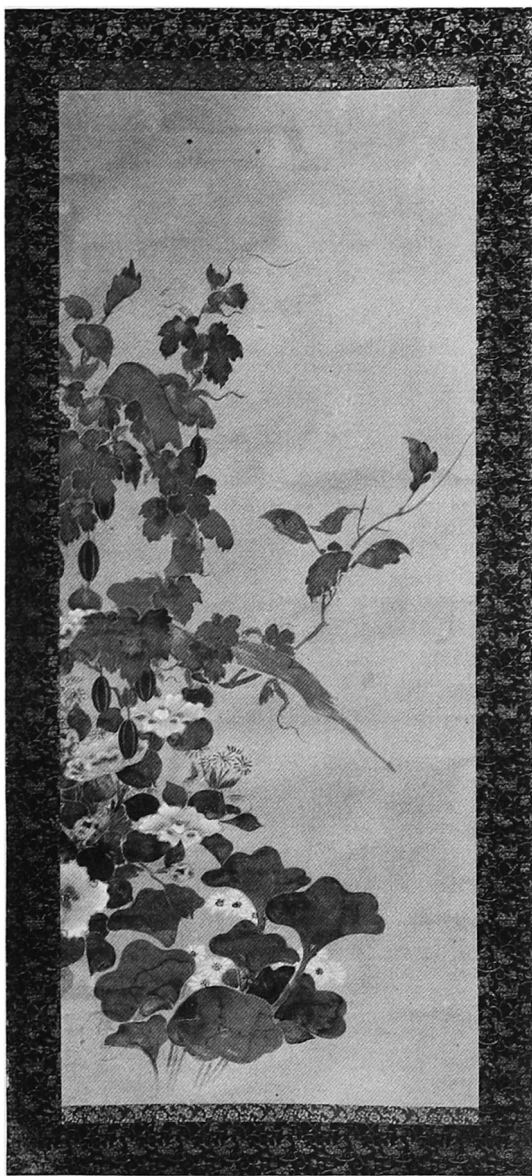
## THE PASSING OF SIEGFRIED BING

The news of the death of Siegfried Bing, who died near Paris, in September last, at the age of sixty-seven, will come as a personal loss to scores of collectors in Europe and this country who owed many of their treasures of Japanese art, and no little of their love for Oriental art, to this indefatigable dealer, who did so much to make known the transcendent qualities of the best porcelains, bronzes, lacquers, and prints of the Far East. The great collections gathered in Paris by the Goncourts, Burty, Rothschild, Gillot, by Grosse and Fuchs in Germany, and by Walters, Freer, Havemeyer, and Shaw in this country, all owe pieces of importance to his knowledge and enterprise. He was a typical dealer of the old school, the friend and guide of his customers, but while keen enough at a bargain, his chief ambition was to make Oriental art felt as an influence for good upon designers.

When he began his propaganda, some forty years ago, Japanese art was still an unknown quantity in the commercial world. When in late years he found that the vogue for things Japanese had resulted in



JAPANESE FLOWER TREATMENT  
From an Old Print



JAPANESE FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS  
From a Kakemono

flooding the country with bastard imitations and cheap caricatures of the real thing, he withdrew from the movement in disgust. It was a source of regret to him that the Japanese themselves, yielding to temptation, had prostituted their art, and in the effort to supply an enormous demand had become manufacturers instead of artists. He believed that a few more years of such work would result in a turn of the popular tide, and that the vulgarization of Japanese art ware would end in its disappearance. While the cheap modern art of Japan grew incredibly cheap and worthless, the old art grew absurdly expensive. Prints that could be bought in Japan for a dollar forty years ago sold for a hundred times that sum in later years, and this was also a source of discontent.

M. Bing wrote much upon Japanese art. His "Japon Artistique," his

Art Nouveau magazine, and the many important catalogues he prepared, such as that for the Goncourt collection of prints, are monuments to his erudition in his particular fields. He was interested in everything pertaining to Japan, where he spent some years in youth and middle age, and the recent war was, naturally, an absorbing topic to him. A year's bloodshed, he remarked with some bitterness, had done more to make Japan favorably known than her centuries of art labors. He published last winter, in the *Revue Universelle*, an article on Japanese women, in which he strove to correct the notion that they are the dolls portrayed by such writers as Pierre Loti.

While Oriental art remained his chief study, M. Bing was interested in all art industries, particularly in those affected by Japanese influence. He established the Art Nouveau work-



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shops, in which many young designers found inspiration, and he organized, at various times, exhibitions of art products. His intense interest in decorative art was dominated by his love of Japanese work simply



FOUR SHRINE DOORS  
Japanese Fret Work, with Carved Ornaments

because he saw in the latter a means of breaking away from cut-and-dried types and styles, and introducing something at once new, pleasing, and vital. That he made mistakes goes without saying, but on the whole his influence was for the good. It would be well if we had many such enthusiasts to infuse new life into the dead bones of popular work. R. C.